AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1.-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously presented) The distraction device according to claim 23, wherein said elongated stem defines a bore extending between said first end and said second end.

16. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting the disc space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

an elongated stem having a height corresponding to a desired height of distraction for the disc space, said stem having a first end and a second end defining a longitudinal axis therebetween and a length along said axis that is sized to be maintained within the disc space when said elongated stem is driven into the disc space; and

a flange at said first end projecting outward from said longitudinal axis of said stem, said flange having a bone contacting face for contacting at least one of the vertebrae when said stem is driven into the disc space and for transmitting a reduction force to the vertebra upon application of an external force to the distraction device; and

wherein said elongated stem defines a bore extending between said first end and said second end, said bore including a keyed bore adjacent said second end, said keyed bore having a non-circular configuration for receiving a complementary-shaped portion of a tool therethrough.

17. (Original) The distraction device according to claim 15, wherein said bore includes a threaded bore adjacent said first end for receiving a threaded portion of a tool therein.

18. (Previously presented) The distraction device according to claim 23, wherein said elongated stem has opposite top and bottom portions, said top and bottom portions having a bone engaging surface configured to resist expulsion of said elongated stem from the disc space.

19. (Previously presented) The distraction device according to claim 18, wherein said

bone engaging surface of said top and bottom portions include a plurality of ridges defined thereon.

20. (Original) The distraction device according to claim 18, wherein said elongated stem includes side portions between said top and bottom portions, said side portions each defining an inwardly curved surface.

21. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting the disc space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

an elongated stem having a height corresponding to a desired height of distraction for the disc space, said stem having a first end and a second end defining a longitudinal axis therebetween and a length along said axis that is sized to be maintained within the disc space when said elongated stem is driven into the disc space; and

a flange at said first end projecting outward from said longitudinal axis of said stem, said flange having a bone contacting face for contacting at least one of the vertebrae when said stem is driven into the disc space and for transmitting a reduction force to the vertebra upon application of an external force to the distraction device; and

wherein said elongated stem has opposite top and bottom portions, said top and bottom portions having a bone engaging surface configured to resist expulsion of said elongated stem from the disc space, said elongated stem including side portions between said top and bottom portions, said side portions each defining an inwardly curved surface, said flange including inwardly curved side edges contiguous with said inwardly curved surface of a corresponding one of said side portions.

22. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting the disc space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

an elongated stem having a height corresponding to a desired height of distraction for the disc space, said stem having a first end and a second end defining a longitudinal axis therebetween and a length along said axis that is sized to be maintained within the disc space

when said elongated stem is driven into the disc space; and

a flange at said first end projecting outward from said longitudinal axis of said stem, said flange having a bone contacting face for contacting at least one of the vertebrae when said stem is driven into the disc space and for transmitting a reduction force to the vertebra upon application of an external force to the distraction device, wherein said flange is fan shaped and is substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal axis of said elongated stem.

23. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting the disc space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

an elongated stem having a height corresponding to a desired height of distraction for the disc space, said stem having a first end and a second end defining a longitudinal axis therebetween and a length along said axis that is sized to be maintained within the disc space when said elongated stem is driven into the disc space; and

a flange at said first end projecting outward from said longitudinal axis of said stem, said flange having a bone contacting face for contacting at least one of the vertebrae when said stem is driven into the disc space and for transmitting a reduction force to the vertebra upon application of an external force to the distraction device; and

wherein said elongated stem includes opposite top and bottom surfaces configured to contact a superior and an inferior vertebra, respectively;

said flange projects from said stem in a direction toward the superior vertebra; and

the device includes a stop face at said first end of said stem projecting in a direction toward the inferior vertebra.

24.-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 44, wherein said stem portion includes opposite bone engaging portions, each of said bone engaging portions configured to resist expulsion of said stem portion from the intervertebral space.

40. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting an intervertebral space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

a stem portion extending along a longitudinal axis and adapted for insertion within the intervertebral space, said stem portion having a height corresponding to a select distracted height of the intervertebral space and including opposite bone engaging portions, each of said bone engaging portions defining a plurality of ridges configured to resist expulsion of said stem portion from the intervertebral space; and

a transverse flange portion having a bone contacting face adapted to engage one of the adjacent vertebrae when said stem portion is inserted into the intervertebral space to transmit an axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae.

41. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting an intervertebral space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

a stem portion extending along a longitudinal axis and adapted for insertion within the intervertebral space, said stem portion having a height corresponding to a select distracted height of the intervertebral space and including side portions, each of said side portions defining a concave surface; and

a transverse flange portion having a bone contacting face adapted to engage one of the adjacent vertebrae when said stem portion is inserted into the intervertebral space to transmit an axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae.

42. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 41, wherein said flange portion includes concave side edges, each of said concave side edges being contiguous with a corresponding one of said concave surfaces of said side portions.

43. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting an intervertebral space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

a stem portion extending along a longitudinal axis and adapted for insertion within the intervertebral space, said stem portion having a height corresponding to a select distracted height

of the intervertebral space; and

a transverse flange portion having a fan-shaped configuration and a bone contacting face adapted to engage one of the adjacent vertebrae when said stem portion is inserted into the intervertebral space to transmit an axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae.

44. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting an intervertebral space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

a stem portion extending along a longitudinal axis and adapted for insertion within the intervertebral space, said stem portion having a height corresponding to a select distracted height of the intervertebral space;

a transverse flange portion having a bone contacting face adapted to engage one of the adjacent vertebrae when said stem portion is inserted into the intervertebral space to transmit an axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae; and

a transverse stop element arranged generally opposite said transverse flange portion relative to said longitudinal axis, said transverse stop element adapted to engage an opposite one of the adjacent vertebrae to limit insertion of said stem portion into the intervertebral space.

45. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 44, wherein said transverse stop element is formed integral with said stem portion.

46. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 44, wherein said flange portion is formed integral with said stem portion.

47. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 44, further comprising an insertion tool engaged with said stem portion and sized to extend outside of the intervertebral space for transmission of said axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae.

48. (Previously presented) A distraction device for distracting an intervertebral space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

a stem portion extending along a longitudinal axis and adapted for insertion within the intervertebral space, said stem portion having a height corresponding to a select distracted height of the intervertebral space;

a transverse flange portion having a bone contacting face adapted to engage one of the adjacent vertebrae when said stem portion is inserted into the intervertebral space to transmit an axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae; and

an insertion tool engaged with said stem portion and sized to extend outside of the intervertebral space for transmission of said axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae, said flange portion formed integral with said insertion tool.

49. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 47, wherein said insertion tool is releasably engaged with said stem portion so as to be selectively seperable therefrom.

50. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 49, wherein said insertion tool is threadedly engaged with said stem portion.

51. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 41, wherein said stem portion is configured for selective engagement with a surgical instrument.

52. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 51, wherein one of said stem portion and said surgical instrument defines a passage, another of said stem portion and said surgical instrument defining a projection at least partially received within said passage to locate said surgical instrument relative to the adjacent vertebrae.

53. (Currently amended) A distraction device for distracting an intervertebral space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

a stem portion extending along a longitudinal axis and adapted for insertion within the intervertebral space, said stem portion having a height corresponding to a select distracted height of the intervertebral space; and

a transverse flange portion having a bone contacting face adapted to engage one of the adjacent vertebrae when said stem portion is inserted into the intervertebral space to transmit an axial force to said one of the adjacent vertebrae; and

a surgical instrument comprising a tubular sleeve sized to receive one or more surgical devices therethrough for advancement toward the intervertebral space, said tubular sleeve ~~being~~ and said stem portion configured to provide selective~~ly~~ and releasabl~~yc~~ ~~engaged with said stem portion~~ engagement therebetween.

54. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 44, wherein said stem portion includes a rounded leading end portion to facilitate insertion of said stem portion into the intervertebral space and distraction of the adjacent vertebrae.

55. (Previously presented) The distraction device of claim 44, wherein said axial force comprises a reduction force to reduce a spondylolisthesis condition between the adjacent vertebrae.

56.-62. (Cancelled)

63. (Currently amended) A method for performing a surgical procedure on adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

providing a device including an axial stem portion and a transverse flange portion;

inserting the axial stem portion into an intervertebral space between the adjacent vertebrae;

engaging the transverse flange portion against an extradiscal surface of one of the adjacent vertebrae; and

applying an axial force to the device and transmitting the axial force to the one of the adjacent vertebrae thereby resulting in axial displacement of the one of the adjacent vertebrae relative to the other of the adjacent vertebrae to reduce a spondylolisthesis condition between the adjacent vertebrae.

64. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63, wherein the inserting results in distracting the intervertebral space to a select distracted height.

65. (Previously presented) The method of claim 67, wherein the transmitting of the axial force results in reducing a spondylolisthesis condition between the adjacent vertebrae.

66. (Previously presented) The method of claim 64, wherein the axial stem portion includes a rounded leading end portion to facilitate the inserting and the distracting.

67. (Previously presented) A method for performing a surgical procedure on adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

providing a device including an axial stem portion, a transverse flange portion, and a transverse stop portion arranged generally opposite the transverse flange portion;

inserting the axial stem portion into an intervertebral space between the adjacent vertebrae;

engaging the transverse flange portion against one of the adjacent vertebrae; and

engaging the transverse stop portion against an opposite one of the adjacent vertebrae to limit the inserting.

68. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63, further comprising providing an insertion tool engaged with the axial stem portion to facilitate the inserting and the engaging.

69. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63, wherein the insertion tool is releasably engaged with the axial stem portion; and

the method further comprising selectively separating the insertion tool from the axial stem portion.

70. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63, wherein the axial stem portion is

configured for selective engagement with a surgical instrument; and

selectively engaging the surgical instrument with the axial stem portion.

71. (Previously presented) A method for performing a surgical procedure on adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

providing a device including an axial stem portion and a transverse flange portion, the axial stem portion configured for selective engagement with a surgical instrument;

inserting the axial stem portion into an intervertebral space between the adjacent vertebrae; and

engaging the transverse flange portion against one of the adjacent vertebrae;

selectively engaging the surgical instrument with the axial stem portion, the surgical instrument comprising a tubular sleeve; and

advancing a surgical device through the tubular sleeve toward the intervertebral space.

72. (New) The distraction device of claim 53, wherein one of said stem portion and said tubular sleeve defines a passage, another of said stem portion and said tubular sleeve defining a projection at least partially received within said passage to locate said tubular sleeve relative to the adjacent vertebrae.